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Dear Mrs Redfern

Short inspection of Huthwaite All Saint's CofE (Aided) Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 30 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked tirelessly to ensure that this school continues to be a good school. You have been creative to ensure that pupils receive the very best education possible. The formal collaboration with two local schools has helped you find new and interesting ways for this school to flourish. As one member of staff commented, 'I feel extremely privileged and proud to a member of staff at Huthwaite All Saint's Church of England Infant School.'

Many parents are effusive in their praise. Many commented that teachers went the extra mile to support their child. One said she couldn't think of a better school for her child to attend. Another commented: 'brilliant school'. However, there has been a period of turbulence and some parents have expressed dissatisfaction, particularly in relation to the home school agreement recently issued. It is clear that further work is required to engage and work in partnership with parents.

Pupils said that they were proud of their school, liked their teachers and enjoyed their learning. On arrival at school they are warmly greeted. They settle quickly to their learning. School routines are well understood and pupils move around the school in a calm and cheerful manner. On the morning of the inspection, all children attended an Easter service at the local church. All staff meticulously managed this process. Pupils happily followed instructions and responded with pleasure when praised by their teachers for their good conduct.

Leaders have worked closely to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. You have focused on ensuring that more of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve at greater depth by the end of key stage 1. Pupils enter the early years at levels below those expected for their age. Traditionally, the focus has been to ensure that these pupils achieve age-related expectations. At times, this has meant that the most able pupils have not had the correct curriculum or correct level of challenge. This is no longer the case. In 2016, more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieved at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics than the national average. This represents a turning point for the school.

You have established a pre-school provision for young children, including children aged two. You spoke with enthusiasm about the impact that this provision is having. Those children who attend the pre-school now enter the early years provision much better prepared to learn. Pre-school is ensuring that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, enter the early years at levels appropriate to their age. Teachers quickly build on this and increasing numbers of children, including disadvantaged children and boys, are making accelerated progress. The most recent information indicates that in 2017 a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils are set to achieve a good level of development. You are rightly proud of the pre-school provision and the difference this is making for children, particularly the most vulnerable.

The attendance of all pupils is above the national average. The proportion of pupils that regularly fail to attend school is much lower than the national average. However, disadvantaged pupils attend less well than others within the school, as do those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The low pupil numbers at the school mean that a small number of extended absences has a significant impact on these figures, but it is clear that some of the most vulnerable pupils do not attend school regularly enough. A great deal of effective work happens to ensure that more pupils attend school regularly. Intensive support is in place for pupils and their families, some of whom have complex circumstances. You recognise that this remains a stubborn issue for leaders to address.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. You and others have worked with representatives of the local authority in order to ensure that the anti-bullying policy is effective. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in their school. They said that they had 'lots of people' who would help them if they were in trouble. They said that bullying hardly ever happened but that if it did, their teachers would resolve any issues quickly. They spoke with confidence about the positive role that the anti-bullying champions played within school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using a computer or a mobile telephone. The group of Year 2 pupils spoken with had a clear understanding of how to lead a positive and healthy life.

Safeguarding policies are in place and all staff and governors receive appropriate training. A member of the governing body regularly checks that the correct risk assessments are in place. The recruitment of staff is well managed and appropriate checks are in place. The single central record of all staff is well kept by the office manager.

Leaders are tenacious in seeking available external support for the pupils and their families. A great deal of work takes place 'on the ground' in order that pupils attend school, feel safe and are able to learn.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have addressed many of the areas identified at the previous inspection. You are committed to make sure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve as they should. This includes the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- You are embracing formal partnership working with other local schools. This work has added positive value to Huthwaite All Saint's Church of England Infant School. For example, you are able to recruit and retain high-quality teaching staff. Moving forward, it is important to continue to ensure high-quality strategic leadership at all levels. It is particularly important to ensure high-quality strategic oversight of pupils' attendance, behaviour and welfare.
- In 2013, 2014 and 2015, all disadvantaged pupils attained the phonics screening check standard in Year 1. In 2016, only half of this small group of pupils met this standard. Leaders have ensured that a programme of support is in place for these pupils, the vast majority of whom are now on track to achieve the standard at the end of Year 2.
- The governing body are well informed and skilled. They provide effective support. It is clear that they are committed to ensuring that pupils within the school receive the very best start to their education.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is a positive champion for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She knows children and their families well and is much-appreciated by leaders, staff, pupils and their families. She and her team work across the school partnership. You are aware of the need to ensure that the positive impact of her work continues and is not diluted due to a lack of resources.
- The current acting head of school has had positive impact, ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve. Teachers are skilfully planning for pupils' learning. For example, more opportunities are happening for pupils to extend their knowledge of different authors and to have experiences that they then wish to independently write about. Assessment is externally moderated and has been judged accurate.
- Parents and children told the inspector that they value the links the school has with the local church.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils and pupils identified for special educational needs support attend school as regularly as other pupils
- the strategic leadership of pupils' attendance behaviour and welfare improves
- the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieving at a greater depth at the end of key stage 1 continues to improve
- further work is undertaken to improve communication and partnership working with parents
- the positive improvement within the early years continues

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Southwell, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and we discussed, and then agreed, the lines of enquiry. I met with all staff during the morning briefing meeting. I spoke with six parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of a further 14 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I viewed a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance, information regarding pupils' achievement and attendance and a number of school policies. I reviewed the pupils' safeguarding and welfare arrangements and documentation. I met with the acting head of school and the acting head of school and pastoral lead. I reviewed a sample of pupils' work. I met formally with a group of Year 2 pupils. I visited the pre-school provision. I spoke with two members of the governing body.